Difficulties for-private operators in basic Telecom Service

3164. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the private sector operators in the basic telecommunication services are facing some difficulties in finalizing the terms of the agreement with Government; and

(b) if so, whether any talks have been held with the representatives of the operators who have been given licences for this purpose; and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) They have suggested changes in a number of clauses contained in the Licence and the Interconnect Agreements.

(b) Detailed discussions have been held with them from 25.7.96 to 7.8.1996. The major issues raised by them were assignability, renewal and termination of Licence, status of Telecom Regulatory Authority, reciprocity in certain clauses on the part of both the Department of Telecom and the Private operator(s), relevance and quantum of port charges and registration fee etc. The points raised were clarified keeping in view the tender terms and conditions.

Irrigation project of Malkangiri (Orissa)

3165. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had approved the Potteru Irrigation Project, Malkangiri (Orissa) meant for providing irrigation to an area of about 1,50,000 acres;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the said project scheduled for completion by 30th June, 1996 could not be completed and that the project cost which was Rs. 14.81 crores in 1975, has had an overrun of Rs. 102.39 crores so far; and

(d) if so, the reasons for not completing of the said project and whether Government propose to complete this project immediately?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDERJIT GUPTA): (a) and (b) Yes, Madam. The Project was to provide irrigation facilities to lands allotted to displaced persons from former East Pakistan who were settled in the Dandakaranya Project as well as to the tribals in the area. It envisaged construction of a barrage at Surlikonda across the river Potteru, a tributary of Sabri river on Godavri Basin.

(c) and (d) Yes, Madam. The cost of the Project had to be revised a number of times since its approval, leading to delay in completion of the project. The cost escalation was mainly due to increase in material cost, labour rates, statutory levies on cement and steel and establishment cost. The Government propose to complete the Project by October, 1997.

Unauthorised pabking by buses of Sadhuvaswani Mission School

3166. SHRI KANAKSINH MOHANSINH MANGROLA. Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred Question 1217 given in the Rajya Sabha on 14th December, 1994 and state:

(a) the outcome of the discussion which the Delhi Traffic Police had with the Authorities of the above School;

(b) the difficulties which lie in the way of the above school in either parking Buses on Street No. 5, which is a much wider road, in the play ground allotted to the School at a nominal rent of Rs. 1/- per annum or inside the school; and

(c) the relief from ecological and pollution hazards proposed to be given to the residents opposite whose houses these buses are being parked?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDERJIT GUPTA): (a) The school authorities were contacted and persuaded to ensure that buses take minimum time to pick up or drop children. They were also advised to park their buses inside the school premises.

(b) and (c) The parking of the buses on Street No. 5 is strongly objected to by local residents. There is also a dispute between the

local Residents' Welfare Association and the school authorities over the parking of buses inside the park (play ground). At present, status quo has been granted by the court over this plot.

The school authorities have been advised to park their buses inside the school premises. Private hired buses are not allowed to be parked in front of the houses. However, buses arrive a little earlier than the time the school opens/ closes. The school authorities have been advised to reduce this time to bare minimum.

Computerisation of registered Mail Services

3167. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have chalked out a detailed programme of computerisation of registered mail services in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Department has installed 2300 Multipurpose Counter Machines in Post Offices which can do registration booking, amongst other functions. The Department has computerised Registration Sorting work partially in Delhi, Mumbai, Madras and Hyderabad.

The Department's Annual Plan for 1996-97 visualises installation of 1500 computer based Multi-Purpose Counter Machines. The Plan also envisages computerisation of registration sorting work in more Mail Office subject to availability of funds.

Replacement of old aircrafts

3168. DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the causes of accidents of four IAF aircraft in one week in August, 1996;

(b) the special measures being taken to maintain the ageing Air fleet giving the details of phasing out of old aircraft; and

(c) whether new fighter aircraft are being purchased to ensure national security; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Three IAF aircrafts crashed in a week in August 1996. Courts of Inquiry for each crash are in progress to ascertain the cause of each accident.

(b) The Government proposes to upgrade the existing fleet to improve their performance and extend their life for a period of 10 years. There is also a plan to phase out 2-1/2 squadrons of old aircraft like Hunters and Canberra.

(c) The IAF propose to replace aircraft being phased out with newer and more modern versions.

Addition of mileage to National Highways in Maharashtra

3169. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the addition of mileage to National Highways in Maharashtra during the last five years and funds provided therefor;

(b) the schemes under which financial assistance is provided to the State Government for surface transport and the details of progress made under the Schemes, Schemewise, in Maharashtra in view of heavy traffic on National Highways in Western Maharashtra; and

(c) whether Government are considering provisions of additional funds to compete with the ever increasing volume of pressure of traffic and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) None.

(b) Financial assistance is provided to State Governments for improvement of certain categories of roads under the Scheme of Economic and Inter-State Importance. One project costing Rs. 4 crore, with Central share